

Report

Body:	Scrutiny Committee
Date:	9 th April 2008
Subject:	Fisherman's Green Tennis/Basketball Courts and The Sovereign Skate Park.
Report Of:	Councillor David Elkin and Councillor Carolyn Heaps
Ward(s)	Devonshire and Sovereign Wards
Purpose:	To inform Scrutiny Committee on the outcome of the review into the development opportunities for Fisherman's Green Tennis/Basketball courts and The Sovereign Skate Park using the developer contributions from the sale of the Wartling Road site.
Decision Type:	Not Applicable
Recommendation:	<p>That Scrutiny Committee endorses the outcome of the Review Board's findings to the effect that:</p> <p>a) The Tennis and Basketball courts at Fisherman's Green are valued by local residents as an area for young people to participate in their chosen activity and should be refurbished to include Tennis, Basketball and a Skating area.</p> <p>b) The Sovereign Skate Park is also a valued facility which is in need of further investment, specifically for new ramps and fencing. Suitable floodlighting should be investigated for both sites, subject to obtaining the necessary planning consent.</p> <p>c) The consultation results suggest that consideration should be given to improving toilets on the Fisherman's Green site.</p> <p>d) Action on progressing the two projects should start immediately to ensure that they are available at the soonest opportunity.</p>
Contact:	Rick Newman, Sport & Leisure Manager, Telephone 01323 415421 or internally on 5421. E-mail address: Rick.newman@eastbourne.gov.uk

1.0	Introduction
1.1	As part of the financial negotiations relating to the sale of the Wartling Road site for housing development, the sum of £567,404 was given to Eastbourne Borough Council from the developer as an open space contribution under a s106 agreement.
1.2	<p>At the April Council meeting a motion was put forward relating to the Wartling Road s106 Agreement and Fisherman's Green. see below</p> <p><i>That this Council notes:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>The need to improve outdoor playing spaces in the vicinity of the new Wartling Road area including Fisherman's Green.</i> 2. <i>That £567,404 from the section 106 money resulting from the Wartling Road Coach Park development has been earmarked for improving outdoor playing space.</i> <p><i>and this Council resolves:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>To consult with local residents, Eastbourne Sport Councils, young people, Ward Councillors and hard to reach groups in order to evaluate needs and concerns.</i> 2. <i>To convene a politically-balanced three-person member panel including the relevant Cabinet member and a member of the Scrutiny Committee to assess potential schemes and improvements.</i> 3. <i>That the report of the member panel be reported to Cabinet for decision.</i>
1.3	<p>Within Eastbourne's Play Strategy (2007 – 2010) approved by Cabinet in 2007 is the statement 'Play is an essential part of every child's life and vital to the processes of human development' and within the action plan we state that we will identify facility investment needs and develop a maintenance/refurbishment plan for play facilities across the town. This Scrutiny review is the first opportunity we have had to put this in to practice.</p> <p>The Play strategy also states that we will consult with children and young people on future facility provision, again this has been the first opportunity to ensure this action point is carried out.</p>
1.4	At its 1 st meeting on 13 th August 2007 the Scrutiny Board consisting of Councillor David Elkin and Councillor Carolyn Heaps agreed the scope of the review which would be to identify, through consultation, the development/refurbishment opportunities for the Tennis/Basketball courts at Fisherman's Green and The Sovereign Skate Park.
1.5	In preparing the recommendations consideration has been given to the Borough Council's longer term vision for the development of both the Fisherman's Green site and the Skate Park. The Skate Park has a temporary planning consent and is the subject of a planning

	<p>brief for additional leisure facilities, whilst Fisherman's Green has been suggested as a potential area for a major new tourist based development. The proposals recommended in this report do not prevent this longer term plan as they will provide improved leisure facilities with about a 10 year life, after which they can be reviewed. This neatly fits with the current remaining periods of the various leases on the sea based facilities around Fisherman's Green. These leases are due for renewal between 2023 - 2027. At this time the use of the whole area can be reviewed as part of a major regeneration strategy for this section of the seafront.</p>
2.0	The Review
2.1	The Scrutiny Board met on two occasions. At the first meeting the scope and purpose of the review was agreed, as referred to in 1 above.
2.2	At the second meeting the responses received through the consultation were discussed and the Board agreed on the improvements required to the two sites.
3.0	Consultation
3.1	<p>The following consultation was carried out as part of the review:</p> <p>Local Residents – 1000 questionnaires were delivered to residents living near to the facilities. The questionnaire was accompanied by a pre paid envelope to encourage a response.</p> <p>Facility Users – Eastbourne Borough Council’s Youth Engagement Officer visited the two sites on various occasions and obtained the views of the facility users. Questionnaires were handed out along with pre-paid envelope to encourage a response. A meeting, attended by Cllr Mrs Heaps and Rick Newman, was also held with users of the Sovereign skate park. Both Councillor Elkin and Councillor Heaps visited the two sites independently and obtained further comments from young people using the facilities.</p> <p>On-Line Feedback – An on-line questionnaire was put on to the Eastbourne Borough Council Website.</p> <p>Eastbourne Borough Council Citizens Panel – The citizens panel were given a questionnaire on facilities for young people with specific questions on the Tennis/Basketball courts at Fisherman’s Green and The Sovereign Skate Park.</p>

	<p>Disability Groups – Our Sports Development team consulted with the disability groups we are currently working with across the town.</p> <p>Eastbourne Youth Forum – A general discussion about the opportunities for refurbishment of the two sites took place at two separate Youth Forum Meetings in December 07 and January 08.</p> <p>Eastbourne Borough Council Officers – Officers from within Planning, Parks and Gardens, Tourism/Seafront, Events and Community Services were asked for their thoughts on the refurbishment opportunities.</p> <p>Local School Children – Pupils attending Bishop Bell School were given a questionnaire to complete during their tutor periods. 150 responses were received from children aged 11 - 16.</p>
<p>3.2</p>	<p>The following is a summary of the consultation feedback</p> <p>Local Residents</p> <p>Fisherman’s Green</p> <p>77 consultations were returned from those delivered to houses around the Fisherman’s Green & Sovereign Skate Park sites. Over 94% felt that there were not enough facilities for children and young people and that Eastbourne Borough Council should spend more money on them.</p> <p>Over 93% of respondents would like to see the Fisherman’s Green site refurbished for both Tennis and Basketball. The other 7% all felt that the site should be refurbished and made available as a ‘multi – sport area.</p> <p>Other suggestions for the Fisherman’s Green site include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a shelter (12 respondents) • Build an ice rink (4 respondents) • 10 Pin Bowling Alley (1 respondent) • Indoor Facility (2 respondents) <p>Sovereign Skate Park</p> <p>100% of respondents thought that it was a good/excellent facility, however respondents all felt that it was in need of a refurbishment.</p> <p>Other comments included:</p>

- Needs floodlighting
- More ramps are needed
- Should have a separate area for smaller children
- Needs to be maintained properly

Floodlighting

Over 90% of respondents felt that facilities for children and young people should have floodlighting so they can be used all year round.

Facility Users

The following suggestions/comments were received from users of the two facilities

- Provide a shelter at Fisherman's Green site
- Provide more benches for sitting on
- Refurbish the toilets at Fisherman's Green
- Add floodlighting to both facilities
- Involve 'us' in the design of the facilities (especially the skate park)

On-Line Feedback

Although the number of responses through the on-line facility was disappointing the comments made were in line with those received from local residents through the questionnaire. They were as follows:

- Refurbish the Fisherman's Green site to provide Basketball/Tennis/Skating area/Multi-sport area
- Provide floodlighting to both sites
- Provide a shelter on Fisherman's Green site
- Replace the ramps at the Sovereign Skate Park
- Provide CCTV for both sites

Eastbourne Borough Council Citizens Panel

The report received from SMSR provided a summary of the answers as follows:

- There is a general consensus amongst residents that there are not enough facilities for children and young people in Eastbourne, that the current facilities have not improved and that the Council need to invest more money into these services.

- Indoor leisure facilities, outdoor multi-sports facilities and adventurous facilities were all identified by more than half of the sample as services for young people and children they would like to see developed.
- More than half of the sample also identified swimming pools and indoor sports facilities as the adult services they would like to see developed.
- Almost a quarter of the sample (or a family member) had used the tennis / basketball courts at the Fisherman's Green site and more than half rated the facilities as poor, in fact just 24% rated them as good. Almost two-thirds of these respondents felt it needed refurbishing.
- Almost a fifth of the sample (or a family member) had used the Sovereign Skate Facilities and the majority rated the facilities as good. Almost three-quarters said that it should be refurbished and equipped with flood lighting.
- Overall, 13% of respondents stated they or their family have used the football courts at the Archery Rec. on the seaside and of these the vast majority rated the facilities as good.
- All facilities such as the three previously mentioned were seen as very important to a local community by almost all respondents. Most also agreed that they do help reduce crime in the community and improve the health and well being of children and young people in Eastbourne.
- Nearly all were in favour of floodlighting at facilities so that facilities are used all the year round.

Disability Groups

Comments/suggestions made by disability groups we work with:

- Ensure access on both sites for wheelchair users
- Resurface the whole Fisherman's Green site
- The fencing needs replacing at Fisherman's Green site

Eastbourne Youth Forum

Comments suggestions made by members of Eastbourne Youth Forum:

Fisherman's Green

- Keep the layout the same (Basketball and Tennis)
- Replace Tarmac
- Replace fencing
- Provide goals for football
- Provide area for inline skating/roller hockey

Sovereign Skate Park

- Replace Ramps
- Replace Fencing

Eastbourne Borough Council Officers

Planning

- The refurbishment of these sites is in line with the terms of the developer contributions from the sale of the Wartling Road site.
- It should be noted that the Sovereign Skate Park has temporary planning permission so any investment in this site should be carefully considered.

Tourism

- We receive a number of requests each year for the tennis courts at Fisherman's Green to be reinstated.
- Other options to consider for the Fisherman's Green site are an Ice Rink, Roller-skating Rink, Beach Volleyball site or large sand play area.

Events

- Would like to be involved in any plans to further develop the Sovereign Skate Park, as this forms an essential part of the Extreme event organised during July each year.
- One thought would be to import soil to create a BMX track adjacent to the Skate Park specifically for the two day extreme event.

Sport & Leisure

The provision of a variety of 'free' sports facilities across the whole town is vital for the future of our children and young people. These types of facilities can have a major impact on the health and wellbeing of children and gives them the opportunity to participate

	<p>in informal sport and play.</p> <p>Community Development</p> <p>Having informal sports facilities gives us the opportunity to work with groups of young people in a variety of sports development and diversionary activities. The impact of involving the young people in the consultation and design stages of the projects is essential to their success.</p> <p>Local School Children</p> <p>150 replies were received from young people attending a local Secondary School and a summary of their comments is listed below:</p> <p>Fisherman's Green</p> <p>Keep the Basketball Courts Replace the fencing Replace the tarmac surface We need a shelter and more seating Provide Tennis Nets Provide football goals Provide floodlighting</p> <p>Sovereign Skate Park</p> <p>Replace the ramps Provide more seating Provide floodlighting Make it bigger</p>
4.0	Financial Implications
4.1	<p>To refurbish the two sites in line with the recommendations contained in this report will cost as follows:</p> <p>Fisherman's Green - £156,500</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Resurface the entire site (£70,000) ▪ Replace fencing around entire site (£65,000) ▪ Provide a youth shelter (£10,000) ▪ Provide new Basketball posts (£2,000) ▪ Provide new tennis posts & permanent metal nets (£3,000) ▪ Provide floodlighting for Basketball Courts (£5,000) ▪ Benches/Bins etc (£1,500)

	<p>Sovereign Skate park - £80,000</p> <p>In line with Eastbourne Borough Council's Play Strategy it will involve the users of the site in the final design of the facility along with the choice of ramps to be installed so it is not possible at this stage to give an accurate figure for the works. Listed below are the works which need carrying out along with a rough estimate of the final costs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Replace fencing (£10,000) ▪ Provide Floodlighting (£10,000) ▪ Provide an additional youth shelter (£10,000) ▪ New Ramps (£50,000)
5.0	Staffing Implications
5.1	There are no staffing implications arising from the outcome of this review
6.0	Environmental and Community Safety Implications
6.1	<p>Providing well maintained, safe environments for the children and young people of Eastbourne is essential and is highlighted within the Play Strategy adopted by Cabinet in 2007.</p> <p>Ensuring suitable well lit facilities are available for young people may help reduce anti-social behaviour.</p>
7.0	Youth Implications
7.1	<p>The provision of facilities for children and young people is essential for their physical and mental wellbeing. The refurbished facilities will enable children and young people to participate in their chosen activity.</p> <p>Participation in these activities will help us tackle childhood obesity and will also divert some young people from anti-social activities.</p>
8.0	Conclusions
8.1	It is clear that local residents, facility users and young people across the town value the sports and leisure facilities available and that investment in these facilities is necessary.
8.2	Facilities aimed at young people should, where appropriate, be floodlit to enable them to be used throughout the year.

8.3	It is essential that revenue funding is made available in future to maintain these facilities to a usable standard.
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Rick Newman
Sport & Leisure Manager

Background Papers

Eastbourne Play Strategy 2007 – 2010
Full Council 18th April 2007 – Fisherman’s Green motion

To inspect or obtain copies of background papers please refer to the contact officer listed above